

April 18, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

**EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM
QUARTERLY REPORT AND ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS**

On July 17, 2001, your Board instructed my office to oversee a number of activities related to improving the administration of the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP). We provided you with an initial report on our progress on September 26, 2001 and a first quarterly status report on January 7, 2002.

On March 5, 2002, on motion of Supervisor Antonovich, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and my office were instructed to report back in 30 days on the progress of implementing the Los Angeles County Citizen's Economy and Efficiency (E&E) Commission's February 2002 report, "A Review of Emancipation Services." We were further instructed to complete a program and budget feasibility study and report back within three weeks to your Board regarding the budget impact, proposed timeline, and impact the recommendations would have on current DCFS funded mandates.

On April 3, 2002, we reported to your Board that many of the recommendations identified in the E&E Commission's report are also included in the *Findings and Recommendations Regarding Los Angeles County's Emancipation and Independent Living Programs* report (ILP Report), prepared by Sharon Watson, which forms the basis for our quarterly reports. Therefore, we advised you that we would be combining the response to the March 5, 2002 motion with our second quarterly status report.

Attached are the ES/ILP Second Quarterly Status Report (Attachment I) and the Report on the Status and Budget Impact of the E&E Recommendation (Attachment II).

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The partners involved in this project, representing nine County departments, as well as the Commission for Children and Families, private contractors and community-based organizations, have been instrumental in moving forward this united effort to improve ES/ILP services throughout the County. This is a successful collaborative effort that is truly driving positive change.

As demonstrated by the aggressive Work Plan (Attachment III), the Interim Team, with the support of the Design Team, the Emancipation Advisory Committee, and other community partners, is working to implement a comprehensive countywide program to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of emancipating youth. Nearly all the E&E Commission recommendations have been addressed in the Work Plan.

We will provide our next quarterly progress report to your Board by July 15, 2002.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-1323.

DEJ:DL
SGW:SRK:tld

Attachments

- c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
- County Counsel
- Chief Probation Officer
- Director, Children and Family Services
- Director, Community and Senior Services
- Director, Consumer Affairs
- Acting Director, Health Services
- Director, Mental Health
- Director, Public Social Services
- Executive Director, Community Development Commission

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EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

SECOND QUARTER STATUS REPORT

The following summarizes the activities conducted since our previous report with respect to strengthening the County's Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP).

Finalization of the Interim Team

The Interim Team is now completely staffed:

- Stacey Savelle, who is a longtime employee of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and was recommended by its Director, Anita Bock, was selected as the Program/Policy Development Expert and began work on February 19, 2002. She has had extensive experience in several different areas of DCFS including various line staff functions, MacLaren Children's Center program development and implementation, departmental policy development, management, and the creation and oversight of DCFS' mentoring program for foster youth.
- Carrie Watson, who received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in May from Howard University and has completed various field work assignments and internships with Washington, D.C. foster youth, as well as with two residential treatment centers and two court systems, was hired as Team Coordinator on February 4, 2002.

Development of a Work Plan

The Design Team, which serves as the bridge between the Interim Team, major County departments involved with Emancipation Services and key community partners, has been expanded to include a foster youth representative, a Community and Senior Services (CSS) representative and two ILP Coordinators (one from DCFS and one from Probation). We have included a roster of the members of the Interim Team and the Design Team (Attachment IV).

That group has now finalized a comprehensive Work Plan (Attachment III) to achieve the goals/tasks outlined in the Interim Operational Agreement. Assignments, including timelines for completing them, have been made for accomplishing each of the initial tasks. A plan for creating a strong, integrated, countywide housing program has also been included.

The Emancipation Oversight Committee has agreed to suspend meeting for six months and, instead, convene an Emancipation Advisory Committee comprised of former foster youth, community providers, and other partners to serve as an advisory body to the Design Team. This group will meet monthly through September.

Work Plan Achievements

- Program and Services to Youth

Stacey Savelle, the Interim Team Program Expert, has visited both the DCFS Alumni Resource Center and the Pasadena Alumni Support Center and met with their administrators and staff. She has begun the task of determining the key components of a successful Alumni Center--one that meets the needs of emancipated youth. The goal is to establish, as quickly as possible, at least two alumni centers in each Service Planning Area (SPA), by building a "satellite" alumni center component on to existing youth-oriented sites such as runaway and homeless youth and mental health Drop-In Centers, Workforce Investment Board (WIB) One-Stop Centers, community college campuses, and community centers. Partnership discussions have begun with the Department of Mental Health, CSS, the Coordinating Council for Runaway and Homeless Youth, Casey Family Programs and other such organizations to build this network.

Two initial meetings were held in March with DCFS and Probation ILP Coordinators and another is planned with line staff and community worker representatives to define/clarify their respective roles regarding case planning and service delivery to foster and former foster youth, ages 14 to 21.

A meeting was held in mid-March with the Los Angeles County Bar Association regarding its foster youth mentoring program and its applicability for special needs transition age youth. The possibility of a partnership relationship is being explored.

Efforts are currently underway to streamline and improve several program delivery pieces, such as the process for issuing checks to youth and for selecting/tracking Teague Family Foundation scholarship recipients.

Naomi Guth, the Interim Team Housing Expert, has now assumed the chairmanship of two groups: (1) the ILP Housing Committee, created by the ILP Budget Committee last fall and chaired by Lisa Nunez until recently, which is comprised of departmental representatives, the Shelter Partnership, Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA), housing provider group representatives and County Counsel; and (2) the Housing Roundtable for housing providers, founded by the Emancipation Committee, which is chaired by the Commission for Children and Families. The ILP Housing Committee has developed a set of recommendations for fully spending ILP Housing funds for FY 2001-02 by June 30, 2002 and a second set of recommendations for using 30 percent of the FY 2002-03 ILP budget for housing.

Regarding FY 2001-02 ILP Housing funds, the Design Team and the ILP Housing Committee jointly developed a program for distributing funds to agencies who are currently assisting emancipated youth with their housing needs and expenses. A Notice of Funding Availability was prepared with the assistance of DCFS ILP staff and distributed to over 350 agencies with whom the County currently does business. Information about this program is being disseminated to additional community organizations through independent coalitions and associations.

The proposal for the FY 2002-03 ILP Housing funds includes a broader array of housing programs than currently exists, as a result of the work of the ILP Budget Committee which was formed last summer. Committee members include representatives of the CAO, CDC, Probation Department, DCFS, DPSS, CSS, and the Children's Commission. Proposed programs include specific efforts for emergency housing, transitional housing and permanent housing, as well as housing search and resource services. ILP Housing Committee members are now working on implementation of these proposed programs in order to begin distributing Housing funds at the start of the fiscal year.

- Administration/Management

Stephanie Carter, the Interim Team Data/Contracts/Evaluation Expert, has held a series of meetings with university researchers, Casey Family Program staff, and departmental staff regarding the ILP program data needs and possible tracking system ideas.

Working with the DCFS, she has gathered what historical ES/ILP program data exists to enable FY 2002-03 program and budget planning by the Design Team. A meeting was held in March to review the outcomes developed by other governmental bodies and organizations for transition-age youth and then compare them with Los Angeles County's outcomes for children, youth, and families. A specific set of outcomes for Los Angeles County's ES/ILP youth will be developed by the beginning of May.

Dilys Tosteson Garcia, the Interim Team's Communications Expert, has arranged and participated in a series of outreach meetings for ILP program stakeholders across the County, completing the first phase of the Interim Team's Communication plan. These meetings are designed to inform attendees about the efforts by the Interim Team, Design Team, and departmental staff to transform and strengthen the County's ES/ILP program and to educate participants regarding the newly developed eligibility criteria for all program services. Fifteen meetings have been held to date involving 465 participants--housing providers, hearing officers, Dependency Court Legal Services attorneys, ILP Coordinators, County Counsel staff, community organizations, kinship councils, foster parent associations, Court

Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers, and transition-age foster youth. Another dozen meetings are in the planning stage.

An updated, comprehensive Emancipation Services Resource Directory has been developed and widely distributed. It is now being translated into Spanish. English and Spanish versions of a current housing availability flyer have also been developed and sent to all foster care providers as well as to DCFS and Probation ILP Coordinators.

A Delegated Authority Agreement for the development of an ES/ILP Program Website has recently been approved as to form by County Counsel. Funding for the project has been identified within the current year spending plan. The anticipated implementation date is June 2002. This Website will be especially beneficial for youth emancipating from the system at the age of 18. Displayed in a youth-oriented format, the Website will include information on eligibility criteria, housing, education, employment, health insurance, life skills training, and other key information needed for their successful transition to independence. The Website will also be available to provide information to Social Workers, Probation Officers, attorneys, Hearing Officers, care providers, CASA, and others working with youth.

Kathy House of my staff has been working with the ILP Budget Committee and DCFS finance staff to update the FY 2001-02 spending plan and develop the FY 2002-03 budget plan. This process, begun in November, has been much more difficult than anticipated, involving format issues, questionable expenditure tracking and coding, fiscal year allocation issues, etc. These areas have all been addressed and should be resolved by the end of April. Work has also begun on the development of a comprehensive five-year budget plan that includes all revenue sources for the ES/ILP program.

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

The report of the E&E Commission's Review of Emancipation Services presented many of the same conclusions as the ILP Report. Most of those recommendations are already addressed in the Interim Team's Work Plan (Attachment III).

The following identifies the potential budgetary impact and implementation status of the recommendations included in the E&E Commission report:

1. *Direct the CAO, in coordination with the impacted departments, to include in his quarterly reports, the "Total Eligible" population versus the "Total Served" population relative to the ES/ILP Program.*

The ILP Report emphasizes the need for a computer-based system for gathering basic information on all youth served by the County and recognizes that the current system does not capture information on all "eligible" youth. Both DCFS and the Probation Department, which has a stand-alone system, are currently capturing most data that identifies youth active in their systems. DCFS extracts the information from Child Welfare Service/Case Management System CWS/CMS, and Probation captures its active caseload data from its stand-alone system. However, many ILP eligible youth cannot be included in those systems (i.e., emancipated youth, youth in Kinship care or KinGAP, youth in the Family Reunification Program and adopted youth). Due to the lack of a comprehensive data collection system, the number of eligible 18 to 21 year olds continues to be an estimate.

Section 4 of the *Administration/Management* section of the Work Plan states "Facilitate the design and development of a comprehensive internet-based system to track all program youth. This system should have the capacity to integrate/combine data originating from various County and non-County service providers." The Work Plan details the steps that will be required to accomplish this recommendation. The estimated date of completion is September 2002.

The start-up costs are estimated at between \$100,000 and \$300,000 depending on the design of the system. The maintenance costs depend on a number of variables (e.g., whether in-house or contracted) and are estimated to be approximately \$130,000 per year. We are exploring funding options and will provide additional information regarding fiscal impact in the next status report.

2. *Emancipation services should be provided by line caseworkers in a decentralized fashion, rather than by a centralized, specialized service group.*

The ILP Report also suggests decentralization of these activities. Section 2 of the *Program and Services to Youth* section of the Work Plan states, " Reassign ILP Coordinators into the expanded Alumni Center network and regional offices and

restore full ES/ILP case planning and service responsibilities to line workers [Children Social Workers (CSWs) and Deputy Probation Officers].” Implementation details are included in the attached Work Plan. The implementation process is targeted for completion by the end of July 2002.

As part of their routine duties, the CSWs should refer youth active in their caseloads to ES/ILP services and programs. The case-carrying CSW is the most familiar with the youth’s skills and needs. The workload and fiscal impact of this recommendation need further review. We will provide more details in the next status report.

3. *Ensure the line caseworkers have appropriate training and information to provide emancipation services; to that end, develop a brochure for caseworkers, emancipating youth, and their caregivers that lists available resources and departmental or agency contacts.*

The ILP Report states the need for the development of a well-designed and comprehensive training program. The lack of clear policies and procedures and the lack of regularly scheduled, comprehensive training are acknowledged. Section 1 of the *Administration/Management* section of the Work Plan states, “Develop a well-designed and comprehensive training program for case management staff to update them on policy changes at the federal and State levels as well as on emerging Los Angeles County program changes.”

As reported in Attachment I, in the Work Plan Achievements section, an updated comprehensive Emancipation Services Resource Directory has been developed and widely distributed. The Directory is currently in the process of being translated into Spanish. The Work Plan also calls for intensive training sessions, regularly scheduled follow-up training and an annual training conference as well. Refer to the Work Plan for implementation details. The estimated completion date for this activity is June 2002.

The costs related to the Resource Directory were absorbed in this year’s ES/ILP budget. The costs for training may be absorbed in the DCFS current year budget.

4. *Revise the organizational structure of the program to ensure that the functional needs of both service delivery and program administration are included.*

The ILP Report recommends the establishment of a new Emancipation Services operating structure within DCFS with responsibility for serving all eligible DCFS and Probation youth. Section 1 of the *Structure/Governance* section of the Work Plan identifies this action. Developing the organizational structure will be one of the final tasks of the Interim Team scheduled for completion in September 2002. The design

of the structure will be based on the findings of the Interim Team, the Design Team, the Emancipation Advisory Committee, and all our partners participating in this process.

The budgetary impact of this is not quantifiable at this time. Until the structure is developed, we cannot determine the fiscal impact.

5. *That the Board of Supervisors, with input from the team leader and the Interim Management Team established by the CAO, establish Department Head Performance Agreement Objectives for each department head involved in the ES/ILP.*

The importance of performance measures and holding management accountable is critical to the success of the ES/ILP program. The ILP Report recommends that the performance of the new Chief of Emancipation Services be evaluated. As outcomes are developed, per implementation details in the *Administration/Management* section, number 2, of the Work Plan, stakeholders will be responsible to ensure the outcomes are realized.

A Department Head Performance Agreement Objective for the nine departments who signed the Interim Operational Agreement for Los Angeles County's ES/ILP (attached to the last quarterly report, January 7, 2002) and the MacLaren Administrator will be developed and incorporated into the Work Plan Timeline prior to the next status report.

Implementation of this recommendation has no fiscal impact.

6. *Improve the information systems infrastructure and data handling capabilities, enabling DCFS workers to obtain data on any client from any place in the County. To the extent possible, adopt a "standard model" approach, using a matrix design to document the services or benefits appropriate for each age grouping as the basis for developing a customized Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP).*

As indicated above under Recommendation #1, the ILP Report identifies the critical need for, and lack of access to, data. Section 4 of the *Administration/Management Section* of the Work Plan states, "Facilitate the design and development of a comprehensive internet-based system to track all program youth. This system should have the capacity to integrate/combine data originating from various County and non-County service providers." The Work Plan contains implementation details.

The ILP Report references the possible development of a “needs matrix.” We believe that through the upcoming training program - which will include guidelines for development of a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) for all youth, ages 14 years and older, as well as updated plans every six months - this recommendation can adequately addressed.

The fiscal impact of obtaining and maintaining a database that will include this up-to-date information is referenced under Recommendation # 1.

7. *Direct the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to assign a staff member to DCFS as a temporary departmental Co-CIO, tasked to assist DCFS in bringing its departmentwide Information Technology infrastructure up to modern standards and to assist the Emancipation Services Group in designing appropriate support systems.*

The need for a departmentwide IT infrastructure is clearly demonstrated as we face difficulties collecting vital statistical data necessary to operate effectively. While the Work Plan is specific to the data collection needs related to the Emancipation program, the need for the improved technology throughout the Department is a priority.

A representative from the CIO is working closely with the Interim Team to assist in the design and implementation of both the internet-based system and a Program Website. The Website will include comprehensive information regarding eligibility, services and resources for use by youth, staff, care providers, attorneys, and CASAs. Implementation details are provided in Section 7 of the *Administration/Management* section of the Work Plan.

Appointing a Co-CIO for purposes of implementing this recommendation may not be necessary. We will further assess this recommendation, and the fiscal impact, in the next status report.

8. *Double the amount of shelter, transitional and permanent housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth over the next three years to bring the total to at least 1,100 beds, approximately 50 percent of the anticipated need.*

Housing needs of emancipating youth are a top priority. In recognition of the demand for housing, the County has already taken steps to assist in this effort by appointing the Chief, Children’s Resources Development. Section 5 of the *Program and Service to Youth* section of the Work Plan states, “Create a strong, integrated, countywide housing program” and identifies the many actions that are necessary to meet this critical need. As mentioned in the status report, the housing partners are developing a set of recommendations to ensure that the full 30 percent of the ES/ILP allocation

allowable for housing is utilized to support this effort in FY 2002-03. The housing partners are pursuing coordination and integration of housing efforts with all County departments as well as agencies of local cities. Developing housing resources is a long-term commitment. While many of the actions related to housing are currently in the works and will be completed in the near future, much of the work involved in this ambitious undertaking will take place over the course of several years. A full-time Housing Coordinator who will be part of the ES/ILP's new centralized, resource development section described in the Work Plan, should be the key person for implementing this recommendation once the Interim Team completes its work.

Section 8 of the *Administration/Management* section of the Work Plan states, "Identify all existing funding streams (Federal, State, Grant, Private and Other)." The Interim Team will ensure that all funding sources available for this effort are identified and utilized. The Work Plan contains implementation details.

Until the actual housing development plan is further developed, and all the potential funding sources that can offset County costs are identified, the costs of this recommendation are not quantifiable. As we move further into the process, we will develop the estimated costs and provide the details in the quarterly status reports.

9. *A continuum of housing resources should be established for emancipated foster youth, runaway and homeless youth, and transition age young adults in each Service Planning Area (SPA) in relative proportions to the number of youth in out-of-home care in that SPA. This continuum includes shelters, scattered site apartments, apartment buildings, and congregate living facilities with a range of supervision levels and associated support services.*

This recommendation represents a piece of the housing plan referenced in Recommendation # 8 above. As noted in the discussion above regarding progress made during this second quarter, the proposed plan for FY 2002-03 ILP Housing funds includes a broader array of housing programs compared to this current year. Program planning for subsequent fiscal years will address the need to further expand programs in order to meet the continuum of housing needs across all regions of the County.

10. *An operational database of all available housing for pre-emancipated and emancipated youth should be built that can instantaneously and continuously show what housing vacancies are available, where, and at what cost.*

The ILP Report emphasizes the need for a database to identify current housing information. Number 5 under the *Program and Services to Youth* section of the Work Plan states, "Create a comprehensive database that includes all housing programs serving youth." The system will identify the beds available according to the specific

needs of youth. The system will also identify the gaps that exist in meeting the housing needs. The Work Plan contains implementation details. The estimated completion date for this activity is August 2002.

The estimated fiscal impact for this system needs further analysis; however, we anticipate that the cost can be absorbed within the current year ES/ILP budget.

11. Full-time “apartment or housing locators” should be hired to find, secure, and maintain safe apartments for emancipated foster youth in SPAs of high need.

The ILP Report suggests that “locators” could play an important role in identifying potential housing resources. Number 5 of the *Programs and Services to Youth* section of the Work Plan states, “explore new models for creating more housing options (e.g., a “housing locator”). As noted in the discussion above regarding progress made during this second quarter, the proposed plan for FY 2002-03 ILP Housing funds includes funding for housing search and resource services. The goal of this proposed program is to provide assistance to youth as well as to agencies in finding housing units, accessing financial assistance, resolving landlord/tenant issues, properly maintaining one’s housing unit, and more. Refer to the Work Plan for implementation details. The targeted implementation date for this activity is August 2002.

The budgetary impact for the services of Housing Search and Resources Services program is estimated at approximately \$140,000, based on the need for two experts at \$70,000 each who would provide centralized resources for all SPAs. The costs for this service can be funded by ES/ILP Chafee funds.

12. *Provide funds for foster parents, foster family agencies, and group homes to continue to house and provide services to youth who turn 18, for a reasonable transition period (e.g., six months to one year), until permanent housing can be obtained.*

The proposed programs for FY 2002-03 ILP Housing funds include a plan that will provide ES/ILP Chafee funds to continue existing housing arrangements for emancipating youth. The FY 2001-02 ES/ILP Spending Plan includes funding to sustain existing living arrangements and prevent emancipated youth homelessness.

The estimated costs to provide housing payments to this population is budgeted at \$900,000 for FY 2001-02. Requests will be closely monitored to determine if the budgeted amount exceeds the demand. If it appears all the budgeted funds will not be spent, the funds will be redirected to support other housing efforts.

13. *Ensure that Los Angeles County’s total current allotment of Transitional Housing*

Program and Transitional Housing Placement Program housing slots, ILP Room and Board Assistance funds, and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 vouchers are fully utilized.

The database referenced under Recommendation #10 above will help to ensure that housing slots and housing vouchers are fully utilized. In addition, the development of new policies related to housing eligibility is currently under consideration.

As noted in the second quarter status report, the proposed plan for FY 2002-03 ILP Housing funds includes a broader array of housing programs compared to this current year. Program planning for subsequent fiscal years will address the need to further expand programs in order to meet the continuum of housing needs across all regions of the County.

There is no additional fiscal impact, as the ES/ILP Basic Allocation allows for a maximum of 30 percent to fund emancipating youth housing costs. It is a top priority to ensure all available Housing funds are spent to meet this need.

14. *Use some ILP (Chafee Act) revenue to supplement Section 8 vouchers to secure apartments/housing in higher rent SPAs and sub-SPA areas.*

The E&E Commission report addresses the issues emancipating youth face in securing housing, particularly in higher rent areas. The use of Chafee funding to supplement Section 8 vouchers is being explored. We will provide more details in the next status report.

As noted in the second quarter status report, the proposed plan for FY2002-03 ILP Housing funds includes permanent housing programs for emancipating youth. Rental assistance under the U.S. Department of HUD Section 8 Voucher program is being pursued with local housing authorities (the agencies that administer this program locally). Although still in the preliminary stages of program design, the goal of such a program is to provide rental assistance through the local housing authorities along with housing search and support services funded by ILP funds and provided by the County and community-based organizations.

The estimated costs to provide this program include a portion of the Housing Search and Resources Services program that will support this effort, which is currently proposed at \$140,000 in ILP funds (see Recommendation #11 above). Additional support for services might be funded by additional ILP funds and/or provided and funded by independent community organizations.

15. *Direct the Auditor-Controller (A/C), in coordination with the E&E Commission, to review recommendations of the Commission and the actions taken by County and report his findings to the Board within 6 to 12 months.*

In addition to the A/C and E&E Commission oversight of the ES/ILP program, this office will continue to provide quarterly status reports that report jointly on the implementation of the ES/ILP Work Plan and the E&E Commission recommendations.

The ILP Report recommends that an ES/ILP oversight group be established to ensure that all recommendations adopted by the Board of Supervisors are implemented.

The costs associated with the oversight activities will be absorbed within both the A/C and CAO budgets.